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SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

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BERGMAN, BRANNER, AND OFF-STAGE DYING

RICHARD B. VOWLES

University of Florida

WHEN Molière delayed the entrance of Tartuffe until Act III, Scene 2, he took some pride in his daring, and it was at least a century before critics stopped talking about the feat of absenting his protagonist for so long and with such felicity. But times have changed. If audiences waited long for the appearance of Tartuffe, they are still waiting for Godot. They are still waiting, unless one subscribes to the theory of a fellow scholar of mine that the exfoliation of the surrealistic tree in the second act of Beckett's play means that God, alias Godot, does come but we, the actors and the audience, are too blind to recognize the divine revelation. In any case, it is now possible to write a play in which the protagonist, or at least a focal character, does not need to put in an appearance at all.

A good instance is Jean-Jacques Bernard's play *L'Invitation au Voyage*, presented at the Odéon in 1924, dealing with a domestic triangle: the prosperous husband; the dissatisfied, dream-beset wife; and the young associate in the husband's firm, the latter an important figure who does not appear physically but only through the eyes of the wife who is infatuated with him. Again, one thinks of the Robert Morley-Noel Langley play *Edward, My Son*, a Broadway hit of 1948, in which we never see Edward except through the eyes of his father whose every unscrupulous action is motivated in the interests of that son, the extension of his own ego. Or of Jean Anouilh's *Ardèle*, also 1948, in which the hunch-backed spinster of the title is frequently addressed through a locked door and is a key to the total action of the play, yet never puts in an appearance. In somewhat similar fashion, perhaps the real protagonist of Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1958) is the dead homosexual Sebastian who lives on, in different ways, in the minds of his mother and his cousin Katherine. All four of these unseen characters are intricated in the cen-

tral action of their respective plays, and yet there is no dramatic necessity for their appearance. It is plain, for example, that the moving picture version of the Williams play loses to the extent that it creates a partial, a faceless realization of Sebastian in the final sequence. Physical embodiment diminishes the horror created by an incremental revelation of words. Yet here we are dealing with a somewhat different dramatic situation, perhaps best exemplified by Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, in which the sustained presence of one already dead creates the substance and mystery of the play.

There is, however, at least one time in the life of a character when he is not expected on the stage, and that is when he is dying. Dramatic propriety has long forbidden on-stage death because it is either ludicrously unconvincing or unnecessarily painful. Operatic exceptions only prove the rule. And yet Elia Kazan could strongly urge Tennessee Williams not to abandon Big Daddy to a dignified off-stage death by cancer in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, so strongly that Williams, as we know, rewrote him—and I think successfully—into the third and last act which became the Broadway version. Thus, while the modern theatre has experimented with keeping characters off-stage, the rigid formula of the well-made play has had such a persistent influence that a sensitive director like Kazan could insist that a major figure be as firmly fixed in the total play structure as the olive tree in Ulysses' bed. Even when he is dying.

But what if he is dying at the very beginning of the play? Not likely, you may say. If the play is comedy, it won't have much genuine dying in it; only the simulated dying, say, of *Volpone*. If it is tragedy, we must see the protagonist before his decline. As it happens, however, two important Scandinavian plays are wholly devoted to off-stage dying. They revolve around it, or perhaps we should say that they focus on the effect that this off-stage dying has on the principals *on stage*. These plays may, in fact, have some relation to each other, and in any case they do constitute one branch of a larger European family tree of dramatic practice. I refer to Hjalmar Bergman's two-acter *Death's Harlequin* (*Dödens Arlekin*, 1917) and H. C. Branner's full-length play *The Siblings* (*Søskende*, 1952), published in English as *The Judge*.¹

The focal situation in *Death's Harlequin* is the death of Alexander

¹ Translation by A. I. Roughton, *Contemporary Danish Plays* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1955), 495–557. All quotations are from this text.

Broman, the personification of an authority that has dominated his business and the community to the state of tyranny and paralysis. All action takes place in a room which connects Broman's private chambers with his stenographic offices, whose occupants can occasionally be glimpsed. The room is, in fact, his office, and the empty chair in it is the symbol of his absent and declining authority. Broman never appears, but his influence is felt in a thousand ways from the opening curtain, when his life is still in the balance and there is some hope, until the announcement of his death. Bertil, the only son and the heir apparent, is too cowed from long parental domination either to approach the bedside of his dying father or to take decisive action in the impasse created by imminent death. The daughter Tyra, who has returned because of the emergency, comes with her engineer husband Lerche, whom she married because of her father's will in the matter. She would rather be married to Dr. Brising, the community doctor, who is in attendance, and the relationship is, in fact, resumed. The second daughter, Magda, wanted to marry Lerche, but again parental authority had it otherwise. She has become a hard, even brutal woman to whom Bertil constantly turns for support. The two daughters are quite different. As Dr. Brising, the *raisonneur* of the play, puts it:

Magda is overly sensitive and therefore brutal. Little Tyra . . . is relatively insensitive and therefore decent and friendly toward every one.

The daughters have felt the impress of the same authority but responded differently. Magda has fled into a hard shell of defense. Tyra has fled into frivolity and, in spite of the impropriety, at the moment of this imminent tragedy she organizes a festive sleigh ride to culminate in a rousing cheer under her father's window and a dance in the evening. And so the three children have been molded by authority and we examine that authority when it is intensively precarious and there is the threat of the void left by its passing autonomy. What can the children do? Bertil is fat, frightened, and indecisive; Magda is cold and harsh; Tyra, little more than silly.

Beyond the domestic situation, there is the matter of the Tofta business interests, the activity of a large firm somewhat like those that Hjalmar Bergman's father, as a banker, must have been involved in, affairs that Hjalmar himself knew something about. There is a great deal of turbulent activity in the office. Indeed more than a half dozen stockholders and executives of the firm conduct a series of huddles and acri-

monious disputes, the sounds of which inevitably carry to the bedroom just off-stage. To complicate matters, the village priest is attempting to get from the dying Broman some kind of financial commitment about the inflated building program. The dilemma is intensified by Broman's refusal to have any part in an enterprise from which he can no longer profit once he is dead. It is easy to see that the rector's suffering is occasioned more by the material hardship he and his congregation will suffer, than it is by the state of Alexander Broman's soul. We never see Broman, as I have said, but it is obvious that he is the personification of a consummate, material egotism. He has no real concern for what he leaves behind or what lies ahead. Bergman might have suggested that the two are related, that one's spiritual welfare and expectation is deeply imbedded in the permanent welfare of society, but he does not. Or if he does, he does so with considerable indirection. The authority of individual power is succeeded by the greater authority of death. The consequent irony is that of Shelley's *Ozymandias*, without the terrifying immobility of the monument and the infinitude of wasteland stretching away, except that here we are dealing with a provincial little wasteland with the citizens doing their inane dance in the foreground. The play is not expressionistic in any of the formal ways, but no one would be surprised if the action were suddenly translated into a *danse macabre*. Indeed, Dr. Brising is the "death's harlequin" of the title. He calls himself a "death-doctor" because Broman's overriding authority has left him no province except that of signing certificates of death. He dances to two kinds of bells, that in the death chamber and those on Tyra's sleigh. They are not unrelated. As Brising puts it: "Death has a wonderfully stimulating effect—on the surroundings."

Then there is the nameless woman out of Broman's past, who comes with dignity to his bedside, is with him as he dies, and later dispatches the pious, self-centered, ineffectual citizens with the announcement that it is over. What is her role really? I am not quite sure that I know, unless it is to say that genuine love, however remote and however scandalous society may call it, is the only true faith. Certainly it is better than the rector's. However, the Lady is too shadowy a figure to compel our attention in any deep moral way. There are the assorted elements of a good play and they are given some kind of cohesion by the off-stage passing of authority, but there is no unified point of view. There is a "spine" perhaps, but no depth of moral insight. I turn now from the Bergman play which was a stage

failure, though in the early days of Bergman's career, to the Branner play, which was a considerable success.

Now we are in a provincial town in Denmark, this time in the study of a judge, identified as such by shelves of law books, a fantastic litter of papers, and a life-size portrait revealing the judge to be a "severe, Old Testament figure." Shades of General Gabler! The courtroom is below; a waiting room, just off-stage; and the sick room above, reached by a circular iron staircase.

Judge Olden, a man of invincible authority, is dying. This time death is more imminent and more shocking than in the Bergman play. The play, in fact, opens with the sounds of death agony: "sometimes like the crying of a small baby, sometimes like the snarling of a wild animal." Sister Agnes appears, a woman of saintly mien, carrying a familiar object. I am tempted to call her the "virgin of the bedpan." It is not long before the Handyman/Undertaker appears, somewhat prematurely however, and he is dispatched.

Substantially, the play is about the death of a man who is heard on stage, but never seen. More accurately, it is about his three children who converge on the scene, what they are, and how they came to be that way as a product of the kind of authority that is passing. The play is not so extensively peopled as in Bergman. There are in fact only the four major characters, one unseen. But what is lost in breadth of social canvas and character variation is gained in a psychological plumbing of past and present.

Arthur, the eldest, in his early forties, is the first of the children to appear. Ascetic, somewhat shabby, and nervous, he arrives from Copenhagen where he is a lawyer following in his father's steps. "There is no one I would rather be like. No one I look up to more," he says. Of the three children, he has been closest to the Judge, and perhaps it is for this reason that, like Bertil in the Bergman play, he is afraid to enter his presence. Unlike Bertil, however, he is a strong and essentially sympathetic character, though we may object to the almost sanctimonious distaste with which he greets his sister.

Irene, in her thirties, comes from Copenhagen society. Bold, fashionable, assured, she announces her presence in a high-pitched, cheerful voice. Though the children have not convened since 1939, before the war, Arthur gives her a chilly greeting. He objects to her smoking, the dress she is wearing, her husband back in Copenhagen, and the lover who

escorts her to the parental village. "Outwardly Arthur's exact opposite," as the stage direction tells us, she goes immediately to the Judge's bedside. But her attitude toward her father has always been different. She tells Arthur: "I only hoped to give him a little pleasure. I have never felt dependent on him—I don't believe I ever looked up to him. But I wasn't frightened of him either." It is barely possible that Branner had Bergman's Tyra in mind when he created Irene.

Michael, who arrives next, is the youngest and earthiest of the three. He has worked as a sailor, stoker, carpenter, and resistance agent during the war, after running away from home at the age of fifteen. Big, dark, fit, and yet almost psychotic as an aftermath of the war, he has the bearing of a gentleman, though hardly the manners. His reaction to the other two is bitter. To Irene he says: "You with your lacquered nails! What do you know of men who sweat?" To his elder brother he is not merely uncivil but belligerent. Indeed his arrival is fairly spectacular. He takes a poke at Arthur when his brother tries to prevent him from going to the Judge's bedside. A few moments later he announces that he is wanted for murder, having helped a whore end her miserable life with sleeping tablets:

... I gave them to her, one after another, like feeding a chicken. And took her again so that she forgot everything. She struggled like one possessed, but I held her hands fast, until she lay quite still—

We soon learn, however, that Michael is merely blustering and inflating his tattered ego with a story calculated to shock. It becomes increasingly clear that Michael should not be considered culpable, that the Judge in fact favors him because he lived recklessly, that he behaved with great courage and selflessness in the Danish underground.

We are never allowed to forget the presence of the Judge for long. His cries of rage and child-like agony can be heard from time to time, his cane thumps the floor when he wants attention, and it is reported that he strikes out at those around him, even at Sister Agnes. Here, again, we are witness to the passing of authority. But what kind of authority?

Says Arthur: "He never had a thought which was not clear and logical. Never wrote a word which was not worth while. Never made a wrong judgment. . . . He set up order where you would have had chaos." Irene: "He cut himself off because he felt himself betrayed. All his life he hungered for affection. . . . He was called 'The Silent' in the town. Every-

one was afraid of him. . . ." But Michael sees him now in death as he really is and always was: "a beast in his lair of death and damnation."

The implications become increasingly strong that the Judge carries great symbolic weight, that he should be accepted on one level of comprehension, as God the Father. When Michael sees the portrait, he remarks: "Think of hanging oneself up . . . like another God Almighty." To Arthur, he is the epitome of justice, independent of everything. To Irene, "a poor old man hankering after human affection." Perhaps so, but quite unlike Pär Lagerkvist's early God, the fumbling chopper of wood.

The symbolism proliferates in a fascinating way. If Judge Olden is supposed to be accepted as God, who is Christ? Is it Arthur, who will put the Judge's papers in order? Is it Arthur who is named Public Prosecutor at the end of the play, in deference to his father? But Arthur has been repudiated.

We recall that Sister Agnes cleansed and treated Michael's feet, bleeding from the cold. It is she, the good angel, who remarks: "You could have the Judge's shoes." And Michael, recalling a bout with screaming, pecking seagulls, says: "It was the seagulls which wakened me to what is called life. Don't you believe me? Would you like to see the marks of the crucifixion?" He is the belligerent, swaggering deity who says, at the end of Act I:

I believe in God all right. I'm God myself. In seven days I created Heaven and Earth—and the sea with all the fishes. Then I created Hell for myself. . . . And now I am both Father and Son. I am Judge and Judged. I have hanged myself on a cross. . . .

At which there is, from the Judge's room, such an outburst of rage that they are all called upstairs.

Really, what are we to believe? When the acrimony of the children subsides into intimate confessional, Arthur admits:

I am no Utopian. I believe in neither God nor in the Millenium. But I have always believed before that it was possible to be an honest man.

And he confesses that, most of all, he would like to escape the role of authority and be, like Candide before him, a good gardener. Michael, speaking in an un-Christly and almost incestuous way, says to Irene: "There's only two. We are the first men. The first man and the first woman. . . . The first two people were brother and sister too. . . . Let's stay together as brother and sister—loving without passion. . . ." But Arthur returns to his bench, Irene goes back to her aging husband, and Michael

remains—to sleep with Sister Agnes! Well, it is not quite clear what he is going to do, but at least he is rid of a kind of authority that oppresses us all in various ways. Earlier in the play he remarked of the Judge: "Let him die his loony death. Maybe I shall come alive when he is dead. Maybe I shall be able to sleep when he is gone."

My belief is that the play is ultimately symbolic, in spite of the naturalism of death throes and bedpans. We are dealing, mythically, with a dying God who will never be reborn. Says Irene, "The age of miracles is over. We have to perform them ourselves now"; and even Sister Agnes remarks of God: "It is as if He were dead for me." So Arthur, the rationalist, is the victim of conventional order and cold authority, which do not always work, as he admits; Irene, the materialist, comes to the compromise conclusion: "Perhaps one may be able to stop the worst from coming to the worst"; and Michael, the romantic, articulates an essentially existential position: "Freedom and Hell—they're the same thing." Here we have three human types, relieved of the God of their childhood, making the best of a bleak, cheerless world. What remains? The empty chair of the Judge's authority. God's empty throne.

Now back to literary history. Both Bergman's and Branner's plays belong to a lineage which probably has its source in Maeterlinck. In Maeterlinck's *Intruder* (1890) we have a play about off-stage dying in which the real protagonist is unseen but always felt in many thinly mysterious ways. He is Death, the great authority, and he is the protagonist of the play, the "intruder" of the title, who comes to the Wife dying off-stage. Strindberg, in his later years, became preoccupied with Maeterlinck, as we know, and with the idea of the unseen protagonist. He does, in fact, describe the protagonist of *Crimes and Crimes* as *den osynlige*, the unseen, though this can be true in no more than a fanciful sense since the play has a perfectly good flesh-and-blood protagonist in the person of the playwright Maurice. But after Johan Mortensen called Strindberg's attention to the long-delayed appearance of Tartuffe in Molière's play, he became more and more preoccupied with this technical strategy and delayed the appearance of Gustav Vasa, in like fashion, until the third act. Again, Lindkvist, the creditor of *Easter*, is an ominous, off-stage presence, whose arrival is withheld until very late in the play.

Bergman's *Death's Harlequin* is also in the Maeterlinck tradition, to the extent that, thinking of Maeterlinck's conception of the actor as marionette, Bergman calls his play a marionette play. Indeed, there is a

fusion of Strindberg and Maeterlinck in *Death's Harlequin*. The dialogue, as Johannes Edfelt has noted, owes something to Strindberg. But it is the idea that people are manipulated like puppets that prevails and gives coherence to the play. Dr. Brising recalls a marionette theatre in Paris and observes that we are all puppets in the hands of some authority.

We marionettes—who were once men—we still have the remains of a small, small conscience.

Resuming the inquiry, Branner has taken on himself the task of examining that vestigial conscience in relationship to the idea of God. It is also, I think, clear that Branner is perpetuating the marionette and harlequin tradition. Of Arthur, a stage direction remarks: "His nervous movements are like jerks on invisible strings." And to Arthur's insistence on justice, Michael exclaims: "Justice, what is it? A fool in his cap and bells." Too, Michael correlates death and sexual experience much as Brising did: "Every time anyone dies I want a woman," he exclaims. "I have a new one every night."

So goes the *danse macabre*, the human comedy, for they are one and the same thing. We foolish people have to make some kind of peace with some kind of authority. We all have an unseen image, and it is characteristic of the contemporary theatre that the off-stage presence in Branner should embody the conscious ambiguity of lying somewhere between human and divine authority. Having already experimented with the off-stage *id*, personified by the dead Hubert of *The Riding Master* (*Rytteren*, 1959), who lives on as animal sensuality in the person of Suzanne and has to be exorcised by her, Branner proceeds to a study of the off-stage *super-ego* as exemplified in the Judge, an image that has to be exorcised by all of the characters.

Ultimately we are less concerned with the possible influence of Bergman on Branner than with an innovation of the modern theatre originating, as I believe, in Maeterlinck and realizing its potential in the Scandinavian theatre from Strindberg through Bergman to Branner, in an increasingly vital, intelligent, and complex experimentation with the unseen. The peculiar distinction of H. C. Branner is that his fusion of symbolism and naturalism permits the most accurate dramatic statement I know of, of man's skirmish with the exasperating ambiguities of the superego.

THE NARRATIVE ART OF SELMA LAGERLÖF: TWO PROBLEMS

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I

LET us first look at the relationship between characters and setting in Selma Lagerlöf's fiction. Let us try to see how these two parts of the poetic machinery work together and see how Selma Lagerlöf has composed with them as with different tunes in a counterpoint piece of music. This might seem a little unusual and strange, but fortunately Selma Lagerlöf has provided us with quite a key to this way of composing which can show us how it is conceived and how it functions. This key we find in one of her many short stories from the 1890's, the one she called "The Knight's Daughter and the Man of the Sea" ("Riddardottern och havsmannen"). There she tells how, in the Denmark of Queen Margareta, the proud naval hero Jesper Muus is deeply humiliated and how this makes him lose his balance and temper so that he destroys and ravages what is around him until he has ruined both himself and others. When his wife, the knight's daughter Kirsten Thott, tries to explain how it all happened, she points at the large fields of drift-sand which surround his castle and in the middle of which he was born and brought up. She relates how she once saw a clump of grass being pulled up in the middle of such a field and how the wind tore up the hole under the clump, enlarged it and at last drove the loose sand all over the region until everything was choked, ravaged and destroyed. And she concludes by saying:

... some people are like the sea, others are like smiling valleys, others again like fields of drift-sand. And with the last ones it is necessary to beware that no one wrenches out the binding grass. If just one clump is wrenched out, the whole man turns into a ravager and devastator. My husband was born here in the fields of drift-sand, and nobody escapes being marked by the place where he is brought up.

"Some people are like the sea, others are like smiling valleys, others again like fields of drift-sand": That is the fundamental idea in the story of Kirsten Thott, and it is also the fundamental idea of character and setting underlying Selma Lagerlöf's compositions. If we raise our eyes from "The Knight's Daughter and the Man of the Sea" and look at all her

writing, we find everywhere characters who are related to their setting and are explained and interpreted by all that is told about it, just as Jesper Muus and his destiny are elucidated by the story of the fields of drift-sand. That is, Selma Lagerlöf does not, like Kirsten Thott, directly point at the setting, saying: "Look, this person is like what is around him." Selma Lagerlöf's setting never becomes an articulated symbol in this obvious way, for then the device would have become boring and ineffective. She simply describes man and his setting together and then we who read the story can experience the similarity spontaneously, and in this way it becomes more effective.

What fine interpretative effect she is able to produce in this way we can see for instance from her way of introducing Death in *Gösta Berling's Saga*, the character she has called "Death the Deliverer":

My pale friend, Death, the deliverer, came in August when the nights were white with moonlight to the house of Captain Uggla. He dared not go directly to that hospitable home for there are few who love him. . . . Into the old birch grove behind the house where even today thin white-stemmed birches strain to reach the light of the sky for the sparse clusters of leaves at their tops, there he stole in. In the grove, then full of protective green, my shadowy friend concealed himself by day, but at night he could be seen standing near the edge of the wood, his scythe gleaming in the moonlight.

Just as Jesper Muus is like the fields of drift-sand, Death the deliverer resembles the birch grove and the nights, white with moonlight. There is the same glorified, elegiac mood upon both the figure and the nature-setting: they meet and merge in the whiteness and pallor: white and pale is Death, white the birches and white the moonlit nights. And the birches which "strain to reach the light from the sky for the sparse clusters of leaves at their tops" become in a way an image of the distressed dying people whom kind Death the deliverer wants to help gain the light of heaven.

In this way the impression of the figure of Death and his character is made clearer and stronger by what is said of his setting. And just in this case this discreet, indirect method of characterization possesses special advantages. Evidently Selma Lagerlöf has not wanted to make her Death figure too material and concrete—that would have broken the general realistic line in her story—and so with fine artistry she has given over almost the whole characterizing task to the co-operation between the figure of Death and the finely attuned nature setting. It is as if Death at one and the same time is seen in and absorbed into the birch grove and the

moonlight. "At night he stands, white and pale, his scythe gleaming in the moonlight," it is said,—that is like a puzzle-picture where the figure and the scythe may consist of nothing more than a birch stem and a branch which shine forth at the edge of the wood in the moonlight.

Selma Lagerlöf has not generally had reasons like these for what one could call her "counterpoint compositions" on character and setting. In almost all other cases it is a question of figures which quite as well could have been characterized by direct description. But even then this specific composition is remarkably effective. The impression of the characters in *Gösta Berling's Saga* is, for instance, to a large extent due to compositions of this kind, compositions so elaborately worked out, that there cannot be any doubt that they are conscious devices of art. But they are found not only in *Gösta Berling's Saga*—they constitute an important part in Selma Lagerlöf's craft all through her production.

It is not only the impression of the characters that is made stronger and more obvious in this way, however, but also the impressions of the events. *Herr Arne's Hoard* is a striking example of this. Not only do the cold and petrifying events—the coldblooded murder of Herr Arne and all his family and the search for the murderers—have the perfect setting of winter dark and winter cold medieval Bohuslän where everything seems to be dumb and petrified. The clearing up of the crime and the melting of the ice in the hearts of the characters are also accompanied by the arrival of spring to the landscape and the breaking of the ice on the sea by the waves. And all this is described in a way that makes it perfectly realistic and natural at the same time as it is most effectively symbolic.

In the same way almost every episode in *Gösta Berling's Saga* is inscribed in the course of the seasons. During the many sleigh rides—the poetic and adventurous ones of the winter nights and the distressed and anxious ones of the spring-winter evenings—during the awakening of love and vigor in spring, during the anxiety and agony of the dry, hot summer days and the abiding calm and stillness of the cool summer evenings—all the time the changes and variations of the seasons in the landscape of Värmland constitute the most excellent sound-board for what happens among the people.

In this way motives of character and nature, events and setting everywhere co-operate in Selma Lagerlöf's poetic machinery, and it is hard to overrate what this kind of composition means in bringing out the individuality of characters and events more clearly and sharply, to give them color

and substance and force. Of not least importance is it that so much *description* in this way can be transformed into narration. Instead of *describing* the characters, Selma Lagerlöf tells us about their relationship with their settings, how Death the Deliverer steals into the birchgrove, how the murderers of Herr Arne are prevented from fleeing by the thick ice on the sea and so on. Instead of motives of character and setting being described each by themselves, they become as it were parts of a machine, parts moving and working in relation to one another. Thus the poetic experience becomes richer and stronger.

This can be said the more inasmuch as it is not only the characters that are "narrated forth" in this way. It is also the setting itself, because the interplay between man and setting is double-acting. This might best be shown by a case where setting—in this case as so often in Selma Lagerlöf it is a landscape—is the foremost object of the story. In *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, Selma Lagerlöf wants to give an image of Ådalen in Ångermanland and she characterizes it as magnificent and depicts how it spreads out with ridges and rivers before Nils Holgersson sitting on a cleft branch in a tree high up on a wooded ridge. It is a good description, but it is hardly the one that leaves us with the strongest impression of the region. Up on his branch, however, Nils is eating a piece of white bread and thinking of how he happened to get the bread. He had been hungry and the eagle Gorgo, who carried him on his back had flown down over a farm in Ådalen to get some new-baked buns, which had been put out in the yard to cool. Then the mistress who was standing beside them watching so that the dog and cat should not steal them, had understood what the eagle wanted:

She was a beautiful woman, tall and fair, with a cheery, open countenance. Laughing heartily, she took a bun from the platter and held it above her head. If you want it, come and take it! she challenged . . . as he sat there on the pine branch he could recall at will the tall, fair woman as she stood in the yard holding up the bread.

"Some people are like the sea, others are like smiling valleys, others again like fields of drift-sand," said Kirsten Thott in "The Knight's Daughter and the Man of the Sea." Here we have the woman, who is like the smiling valleys, like the river valley in Ångermanland. When we visualize her as Nils Holgersson did, we see in her, in a way, also her landscape. There has, so to speak, arisen an "overradiation" from man to nature, which sheds a clarifying light over the landscape. The beautiful woman with her

happy, open face stretching out her white bread towards the eagle like a gift from civilization to wilderness, is mainly a device in the landscape description and she is left in anonymity after she has helped her landscape stand out bright and smiling and open-handed, like herself.

But Selma Lagerlöf lets light fall from man on nature also in other ways. How this comes about may best be understood if for a moment we listen to some thoughts which Jonas Lie, the Norwegian author, once devoted to the problem of how a writer best could describe inanimate nature.

If you want to depict a smoking ship's lantern which is about to go out, then you can, to be sure, do it by describing the dirty glass, the abominable smell, the soot spreading out, the hot brass, in one word the entire composite. But just add the man as he is standing over it in the deckhouse, struggling with sleep after a hard watch with the smell of black oil in his face and smoke deep down in his throat—and I think the expiring lantern gives quite a different impression. The first one was the direct way that exhausts itself in detailed description but as a whole, however, does not at all depict the sum of the ill-smelling abomination with the power that art is able to by the indirect method. One single successful reflex light saves twenty pages of details.

A reflex light of this kind shines of course upon a setting in many places in literature, but I think that the light is especially strong and steady in Selma Lagerlöf. For in her fiction nature is never alone; it never is there only for its own sake. Just as in Lie's example the man drunk with sleep is bending over his lantern with the smell of oil in his face, so in her writings men everywhere are standing around nature: worrying about it, struggling with it, rejoicing at it, working with it. And the rendering of their impressions and reactions pictures nature much better than long descriptions—and the long descriptions are not found in Selma Lagerlöf either.

Indirect description by overradiation and reflex light from characters and events is the most important secret in Selma Lagerlöf's rendering of landscape and nature. She is a story teller also in her description of nature, she "narrates forth" her landscapes, narrates them into us, and that is the foremost explanation why they have such a power over people, that they go by the thousands to see "Gösta Berling's country" and follow in Nils Holgersson's footsteps through Sweden.

II

Let us now direct our attention in another direction, which also displays Selma Lagerlöf's craftsmanship and gives an insight into the poetic

machinery of her writing. Now it is a question of the device, by which she succeeded poetically in transforming the tension and contradiction in her view of life. For it has gradually become evident that Selma Lagerlöf was not the harmonious and problem-free person she might have seemed during her life. Ever since she came into contact with modern thought and science—and that happened especially during her time at *Högre lärarinneseminariet* in the eighties—she was torn between faith and knowledge, mysticism and rationalism. She was caught between the belief in the supernatural of the people in the milieu where she was brought up and the belief in the rational idea of the universe of her contemporaries, and faced by this choice she could never finally make up her mind.

For many years during the eighties this dilemma seems to have sentenced her to silence as an author. How could she tell the supernatural stories from her home country she had chosen as her subject when the spirit of the times was against them and when she herself did not know what to think about them?

However, *Gösta Berling's Saga* was written, for at the end Selma Lagerlöf found a solution to her dilemma. It was not a philosophical solution, because Selma Lagerlöf could no more than anyone else finally disprove mysticism or rationalism or synthesize them. It was an aesthetic and in a way a personal solution. Instead of choosing and rejecting, *she involved herself along both lines at the same time*. This might sound paradoxical, but Selma Lagerlöf succeeded in creating a form of fiction that made such a double commitment possible. That was achieved by letting her different ideas be announced, partly by different characters or social groups in her books, partly by different kinds of narrators, telling the story in the first person singular. In this way she did not need to stand as guarantor for any of the two views of life. She could give knowledge what belonged to knowledge and then freely involve herself in what she called her "attraction towards the mystical, towards old popular beliefs in ghosts and elemental powers."

Let us for a moment consider how this latter technique with varying narrators behind the general account looks and functions. We do it preferably in a chapter in *Gösta Berling's Saga*, where this device is not yet quite completed, but rationalism and mysticism openly clash with each other, and the author herself is misled into taking sides with the one more than she was really prepared for. This is the chapter "Ghost Stories," relating how the Evil One himself—or maybe Sintram—sits

down in the rocking chair behind the old lady Ulrika Dillner and how Ulrika faints when she turns around and sees him. In this chapter it is first of all Selma Lagerlöf's modernly educated rational self that is the spokesman, intimating that what is to be told is simply one of the stories she heard elderly gentlemen, farmhands and crofters, or her grandmother tell when she was a child. Thus she is only the reteller without responsibility. She does not vouch for the truth of the story, does not guarantee its reliability.

But then the perspective suddenly changes. It is no longer a matter of looking at the old gentlemen, the crofters or the story itself from a critical distance. Instead we are suddenly standing in the middle of the story itself. It is as if one of the original tellers had started to speak, duly supported by Selma Lagerlöf's artistic skill. And in a way this is exactly what has happened, because Selma Lagerlöf had a wonderful ability of identifying herself with different spokesmen. This new narrator is completely unfamiliar with all critical reservations and the story is rendered with such an involvement and such a conviction that it is hard to believe that the story is not true or anyhow that the narrator himself would not believe in it.

But at the end Selma Lagerlöf seems to discover that with this sudden change of the narrator's identity, she might have done her work too well. So she lets her modern rational self return at the end of the story and does it with such emphasis that she seems completely to disprove the story she has just told:

Oh, children of a later day! I cannot demand that anyone should believe these old stories. They cannot be anything but lies and fancies. But the fear which rolls over the human heart till it wails like the floor planks under Sintram's rocking-chair . . . is it only lies and fancies? Oh, if it only were!

But as I said, this case where Selma Lagerlöf openly opposes rationalism to mysticism and takes sides with one and denies the other is an exception. Usually she presents the two points of view side by side without any disturbance as two equivalent possibilities. In this way *Gösta Berling's Saga* is written on two levels at one and the same time: the mystical-popular level, where the events are given a supernatural or religious explanation and the psychological-rationalistic where the events are looked upon as produced by the qualities of the characters themselves, the circumstances of the time and so on. And principally it is done in the same way in her other books.

Sometimes Selma Lagerlöf herself felt inferior—or at least pretended to—because she had chosen the way of double involvement instead of clearly and firmly choosing sides. In a letter she once wrote:

I belong to those silly hens that go around picking grains in all fields until they don't know where they belong. If I ever had a deep religious experience I should probably know where I belong.

And in another letter she confessed:

I have had my periods when I have been a strong materialist and a woman of reason, but my temperament as an author, wanting to move in the field of mysticism, always forces me back into the ranks of believers. So you find widely differing opinions in my works. . . . I am afraid you will soon find that my mind is a room where all instruments play but the basic melody is missing.

The fact that throughout her life Selma Lagerlöf was directed towards listening, receiving and rendering instead of choosing, deciding and denying was probably sometimes a weakness in her personal life. But in her authorship it was a strength, which became the foundation of her greatness as a writer. For just by *being* a hen, picking grains in all fields, a room where all instruments play, she was forced to develop the form of narration that can be called the art of double involvement. And in her hands that form was carried to a kind of perfection of the craft of fiction, where faith and knowledge are put side by side as they are in reality, and where the interplay and the gliding from one to the other recreates the ambiguity and contradiction of life itself. And with this richness and exuberance of ideas the basic melody of Selma Lagerlöf's fiction is not missing either. It is there and its name is tolerance, empathy and human understanding.

EUPHEMISM IN RECENT SWEDISH LITERATURE

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THE study of euphemisms and their use presents a complex and intricate problem. The present paper is limited to a brief summary of my approach to the problem, along with certain preliminary conclusions based on the material examined. The individualistic nature of the euphemism and the complexity of the subjective and emotional forces involved make it difficult to arrive at any definite conclusions of a general nature. Any such generalizations must be tempered by recognition of the fact that usage varies within different social and age groups, large or small, and even with the person and the particular circumstances in which he finds himself. Hence an investigation of this sort can only indicate in a general way tendencies in the directness or indirectness of our speech patterns, especially when dealing with subject matter which seems to require delicate treatment.

About twelve years ago I began gathering material for a study of various changes which are taking place in Swedish, with particular, but not exclusive, emphasis on the written language. Since it soon became apparent that an interesting aspect of this problem was the degree to which taboo words and phrases were replacing euphemistic attempts to avoid them, I carefully noted all such expressions that occurred in my written sources. Because euphemisms represent living and often rapidly changing aspects of our everyday interrelationships and because their unwritten use is a very important factor, I also added to my material many examples of oral, everyday usage gathered during two visits to Sweden, a two-month period in 1952 and a six months' stay in 1955-56.

My sources included daily newspapers from large and small cities in various sections of the country, magazines, and fiction. The latter was divided between serious literature and what is commonly referred to as "underhållningslitteratur" with a somewhat greater emphasis on the latter. The emphasis on the lighter genre was deliberate because it tends to reveal current usage more directly than most of the fiction of a "higher literary" quality. Quantitatively this amounts to: 1) a sampling of a large number of newspapers from the period 1937-1957; 2) a thorough examination of four daily newspapers chosen with geographic distribution

as well as difference in size in mind, over the four-year period 1948–1951, namely: *Dagens Nyheter*, *Göteborgs Sjöfarts- och Handelstidning*, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, and *Östersunds Posten*; 3) a sampling of a number of magazines from the period 1936–1957; 4) a thorough examination of 127 books of fiction published between 1926 and 1957; and 5) a random sampling of oral usage in various sections of Sweden from Skåne to Jämtland during the two periods previously indicated.

In 1937 Gunnar Björkman published a highly interesting study entitled *Eufemismen* in which he divided and subdivided his material in great detail into categories indicating the various formal types of euphemisms that were in use. Thus his detailed treatise on the subject deals primarily with the many technical aspects of the problem. The present paper, however, will deal less with the classification of the various forms that these indirections take than with the intent behind them and the thought that they convey. We shall also briefly observe the degree of consideration that the writer shows for the feelings of his reader. That is to say, how euphemistic is the euphemism?

After having presented a brief historical summary of the concept of euphemism and its use, Gunnar Björkman examines in some detail earlier definitions of the term. He rejects them all as being inadequate in one respect or another and arrives at his own definition, which he states as follows: "Eufemismen är ett icke stötande uttryck, som uppfattas som ersättning för ett skenbart närmare till hands liggande stötande sådant."¹ This definition seems inadequate to me in that it ignores one aspect of the problem. When one says "icke stötande," does that mean "not offensive" to anybody under any circumstances? This is too absolute and limiting a definition since it permits no differentiation as to degree of offensiveness. Therefore, I should like to modify Björkman's definition to read as follows: "Eufemismen är ett *mindre* stötande uttryck, som uppfattas som ersättning för ett skenbart närmare till hands liggande *mer* stötande sådant." This definition, it seems to me, takes into consideration the degree of euphemism involved and also allows for the difference in sensitivity found among the readers. It agrees essentially with the definition which Hjalmar Falk arrives at when he states: "Ved eufemisme forstås tilslørende, besmykende eller formildrende uttryck for det slette, lave, anstøtelige eller ubehagelige."² Hans Sperber also included this distinc-

¹ Björkman, Gunnar, *Eufemismen*, Stockholm, 1937.

² Falk, Hjalmar, *Betydningslære*, Kristiania, 1920, p. 119.

tion when, in his discussion of the euphemism and its characteristics, he said: "The common aspect of all cases belonging in this [category] is that the speaker, instead of a word suitable for the release of strong emotions, inserts another word which does not possess the characteristics of the one having emotional coloring (*Affektträger*) or possesses them to a smaller degree."³

In his study Björkman points out that in the last few decades revolutionary changes have taken place in the fields where euphemisms are most frequent. Then he goes on to say that one could expect to find corresponding changes in the language involving either a complete abandonment of the use of euphemisms or at least the development of less indirect substitutes (p. 16). But, he says, such is not the case. Although his assertion may be true to some extent, such a statement makes it necessary to raise the question, just when does a euphemism cease to be a euphemism? Björkman answers this question by stating that only when we no longer recognize the expression as being a substitute for a more offensive one does it cease to be a euphemism, or, as he puts it: "Först när vi ej längre kunna uppfatta det icke stötande uttrycket some ersättning för det stötande upphör det att vara eufemism" (p. 10). While this is true as far as it goes, it seems necessary to add that when the supposedly less offensive expression, because of the context, elaboration of the context, or use together with another euphemism, becomes as offensive as the word or expression that is being avoided, then it has also lost its euphemistic character in those surroundings. A description of the sex act in some detail can hardly be considered euphemistic just because a certain word or phrase is avoided. A person who would be offended by the term might well be at least equally offended by the detailed description. In such cases, the indirection has become a stylistic means of increasing the desired effect rather than toning it down. The taboo word would appear less effective and in many cases would even suggest a coldly impartial, clinical point of view which in the surroundings in which it occurs would not be the intent of the author, since he wishes to achieve a titillating effect.

³ "Das Gemeinsame aller hierher gehörigen Fälle ist, dass der Sprechende statt eines zur Auslösung starker Affekte geeigneten Wortes ein anderes einsetzt, welches die Eigenschaften des Affektträgers nicht oder in geringerem Grade besitzt." Sperber, Hans, *Einführung in die Bedeutungslehre*, Bonn, 1923, p. 50.

In this connection, Hans Sperber has pointed out that a euphemism implies that the responsibility for its interpretation is divided between the writer on the one hand and the reader on the other. He says:

When one has just created the veiled expression ad hoc, or whenever it is relatively little in vogue, then, of course, one shifts a portion of the responsibility onto the listener by leaving to him, because of the indefiniteness of the chosen expression, the possibility of understanding it to be something quite inoffensive; if he nevertheless interprets the euphemism as it is intended [to be interpreted], if he attaches to the general expression a special and indeed offensive meaning, then he has half-way met the intentions of the speaker, who after all really wants to express a forbidden concept.⁴

If then the "veiled expression," as was often the case in the material under consideration, is so detailed or so descriptive in nature as to preclude any ready interpretation outside of the offensive one, which is also the intended meaning, then this element of choice is removed. Whenever it can give rise to only one interpretation, the euphemism has lost its euphemistic quality. Furthermore, as Sperber points out, it is possible that this euphemism then becomes so commonly used that "with respect to meaning and emotional significance [it] can by degrees completely take the place of the regular word that it has displaced"⁵ and thus give rise to the need for a new substitute. Thus this whole question is more complicated than Björkman indicates. We can only conclude that a euphemism ceases to be a euphemism not only when, as he suggests, we no longer recognize the expression as being a substitute for a more offensive one, but also when the euphemism is either so belabored that it becomes at least as offensive as the expression which is being avoided, or when it can give rise to only one interpretation.

The fact that the euphemism, by its very nature, almost always is used in those human relationships which are associated with unpleasant

⁴ "Hat man den verhüllenden Ausdruck erst ad hoc gebildet, oder ist er verhältnismässig wenig eingebürgert, so wälzt man nämlich einen Teil der Verantwortung auf den Hörenden ab, indem man ihm durch die Unbestimmtheit des gewählten Ausdrucks die Möglichkeit lässt, darunter etwas ganz Unanstössiges zu verstehen; fasst er den Euphemismus trotzdem so auf, wie er gemeint ist, legt er also dem allgemeinen Ausdruck einen speziellen und zwar anstössigen Sinn bei, so ist er den Absichten des Sprechenden, der einen eigentlich verbotenen Begriff doch zum Ausdruck bringen will, auf halbem Wege entgegengekommen." Hans Sperber, *Über den Affekt als Ursache der Sprachveränderung*, Halle, 1924, p. 64.

⁵ "... in Bezug auf Bedeutung und Gefühlswert nach und nach ganz die Stellung des von ihm verdrängten Normalwortes einnehmen kann." *Ibid.*, p. 84.

matters, or matters requiring some delicacy, led quite naturally to the classification of the materials under consideration into the broad general categories listed below. Included in the table are figures which indicate the percentage of indirections found within each major category. These figures, however, do not reveal the degree of indirection involved, but merely show the relative frequency of expressions which ordinarily would be considered to be euphemistic in most contexts:

1. Political and social problems, national and international, requiring discretion.	10.0%
2. Sex and sexual relationships, normal and abnormal.	41.8%
3. The body, its parts and functions, and such expressions as "unmentionables."	13.0%
4. Obscenity and profanity of all types.	24.7%
5. Crime, excessive drinking, etc.	7.8%
6. Illness, accidents, and death.	2.7%
Total	100.0%

As has been pointed out before, rather sweeping changes have taken place in many of these human relationships. According to Björkman, however, these changes have not been accompanied by a corresponding change in our use of the language, particularly with regard to euphemisms. In certain fields, such as national and international politics, this statement still seems to be true. Here the indirections are mostly such well-established euphemisms of long standing as "utöva påtryckningar" in the following:

Vi måste få klart besked, dels vilka land eller vilka länder som utövat "påtryckningar," dels vilken form dessa haft.⁶

Many others came into frequent use during and after the Second World War. Among the most frequent are those connected with the inhuman methods employed by the Russian and Nazi "questioners," and such newer creations as "hoppa av" or "navigera fel" (to defect, to desert), "dimbildning" or "mörklägning" (attempts to cover up, withholding information), "köra vagnen i diket" (lead the country on a dangerous path), and "underjordisk verksamhet" (underground activity).

However, even in this category many of the indirections are so well known that they have become stereotypes which give rise to only one

⁶ *Dagens Nyheter*, August 22, 1948, p. 2, col. 6.

interpretation and hence no longer can be considered to be euphemistic in intent or in effect, especially in the surroundings where they so frequently occur. There certainly is very little indirect quality left in the expression "friställts för andra uppgifter" in the following context:

... och att 40000 nu ha tvingats därifrån eller finare uttryckt 'friställts för andra uppgifter'.⁷

In most of the other categories listed above, on the other hand, it appears that Björkman's assertion (made in 1937) must be modified considerably today. Changes *have* taken place in the use of indirections. It is precisely the development of less indirect substitutes which is so characteristic of the style of the writer of fiction today.

Sex and sexual relationships have, perhaps more than any other subject, been considered taboo, particularly as a topic of conversation in mixed company. Hence this is a field in which the euphemism has flourished, and still does. An examination of the quantitative distribution of indirections in the table above reveals that this category makes up nearly forty-two percent of all euphemisms in my sources. This fact can be considered all the more significant when one realizes that a large percentage of my material was gathered in the press, where the subject does not occur as frequently as in modern light fiction, the tenor of which is aptly characterized by the book reviewer who writes:

I år är alla böcker liderliga och otuktiga och hjältarna är svåra på fruntimmer.⁸

Generally speaking, when the subject occurs in the newspapers it is dealt with rather realistically and objectively. One of the sources for a considerable percentage of the material in this category has been the newspaper columns which deal with personal problems. On the whole, the letters to the columnist, which often indicate a rather limited background on the part of the writer, are full of euphemistic expressions. This is perhaps to be expected when one considers the usual clientele of such a columnist. The answers, however, are generally straightforward, factual, and rarely euphemistic in nature.

A difference in the approach of various social classes toward this problem is discernible. The country dweller has perhaps always been more objective in his attitude toward the subject than has the city dweller. This

⁷ *Ibid.*, September 9, 1948, p. 1, col. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, October 3, 1948, p. 8, col. 8.

difference in attitude toward the use of the "forbidden words" and situations was pointed up by the controversy which raged a few years ago over the naturalistic works of Vilhelm Moberg, particularly *Utvandrarna*. The press of that period abounded in articles in which conservative elements criticized Moberg's frank descriptions of the life of a group of early emigrants written in a language which to many is not only unrestrained but, in the words of one book reviewer, "shockingly vulgar." The more liberal elements, including newspaper men, many critics and professors, and an occasional member of the clergy, rallied to Moberg's defense. They argued that Moberg has succeeded very well in capturing the language as well as the rather coarse, often unconventional life among certain groups of society and that anyone who objects is not objecting to his presentation, but rather to life as it was among the people who make up the central group of the story. This controversy points up the fact that among certain classes at least the taboos are breaking down, whereas other groups still cling to them as firmly as ever.

It should be emphasized at this point that although Moberg shocks many a reader by his directness of speech, he most frequently does so without using the taboo word itself. Even he makes far greater use of the technique of belaboring the euphemism to the point where it becomes a stylistic means of increasing the effect rather than one of toning it down than he does of the forbidden words themselves. He does not avoid these words, but he apparently finds the other approach more effective. The following series of five indirections is an excellent example of this technique:

Och det var sant: I min kvern fick varje bonde avmalet. Det var sant, många fruntimmer fick dela med sig av sina karlar åt mig. Många lade jag upp mig för, bara för att jag ömkade dem. Det kan ju bli torrt och avätet i beteshagen för gifta manfolk, när deras käringar blir till åren.⁹

Within the category of sex and sexual relationships there is, of course, a considerable variation in the use of euphemisms, depending on the degree of delicacy involved in the topic under discussion. Kissing apparently only rarely requires an indirect approach, for only very few examples occurred. The nature of these was such that it is questionable whether they are euphemisms at all, or merely stylistic variations. For example:

⁹ Moberg, Vilhelm, *Utvandrarna*, Stockholm, 1949, p. 357.

Och fick han inte gälden så tog han den själv från hennes kind—i värsta fall.¹⁰

There were a few examples of indirections implying virginity, but in most cases this condition seems to be taken for granted and, as one would expect, only the negative aspect of the question becomes the subject of such euphemistic treatment as the following:

Ingrid Kristina visste att några av flickorna verkligen inte voro nunnor utan hade kunskap om både ett och annat.¹¹

Far more common are the indirections which attempt to deal delicately with "intima förhållanden" between men and women, especially on the part of the unmarried. Some of these, like the following, have no overtones of anything questionable at all except in the particular context and therefore are excellent examples of true euphemisms:

Hon hade varit hushållerska åt många herrar förr och det hade alltid blivit till belåtenhet, sade hon och blinkade häftigt med ena ögat. Men när hon fick veta att jag var gift upphörde hon att blinka.¹²

Although others have become stereotypes and give rise to only one interpretation, they still are less offensive than the taboo expression would be. While the legal term "delat säng och säte" in the following is rather direct and matter of fact, a certain euphemistic flavor is nevertheless retained in this context which involves an illegal relationship.

Här har jag fött honom i flera veckor, å klätt honom i min mans klär å till och med delat säng och säte med honom—och nu tänker han överge mig.¹³

In still others the effect of an indirection is completely negated by the bluntness of some other element of the context, indicating that the euphemism was not used in order to consider the sensitivity of the reader, but rather to increase the effect by repeating the same idea in different form.

Jag tänkte inte röra Elin på det förbjudna viset. Jag ämnade inte göra hor med henne, om jag fick krypa till henne här om natten.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Dagens Nyheter*, July 29, 1949, p. 10, col. 5.

¹¹ Blomberg, Harry, *Landets Lågor*, Stockholm, 1937, p. 52.

¹² *Dagens Nyheter*, June 12, 1948, p. 6, col. 7.

¹³ Pelle i Ryet, *Revolutionen i Bystamåla*, Göteborg, 1935, p. 31.

¹⁴ Moberg, Vilhelm, *Utvandrarna*, Stockholm, 1949, p. 344.

There are also a number of cases in which the author uses an indirection, not in order to avoid offending, but rather to be suggestive in a context which ordinarily does not involve any feeling of delicacy. The following seems a round-about way to describe the date of one's birth:

En gång för arton år sedan låg han hos mamma—: så blev jag född.¹⁵

But perhaps the most common, and often least euphemistic, device is the above-mentioned technique of belaboring an idea by the use of a series of indirections, euphemistic use of incomplete thoughts, and the like, until the total effect becomes at least as "offensive" as the taboo expression itself would be. It should be noted that in examples of this device each individual indirection is usually euphemistic in nature, but that the total effect is not. For example:

Och så känner jag hettan svepa emot mig som en orkan, utan att han tar ut steget. —Nej jag förstår ingenting! Om inte erotik och en sådan vänskap tillsammans är kärlek, så inte vet jag. Han måste förstå, att jag är färdig till vad som helst för honom.— Jag skulle — i denna stund! — inte håller jag ju på laga former och sådant! — det vet han — och när han precis själv —, han längtar ju efter mig ibland så han skakar—varför då hålla på och pina och plåga mig på det här sättet.¹⁶

Most of the indirections concerning pregnancy and birth make specific use of such phraseology as: "att få en liten," "bli (vara) med barn," "vänta en arvinge," "en lycklig tilldragelse," or to "indisposition" of some sort. Somewhat less common are such terms as: "det där," "det här," "på det viset," "tillstånd," and "frukt." Illegitimacy is most often indicated by such adjectives as "oäkta" or "utomäktenskapliga," neither of which could be said to be euphemistic. "Tröskelbarn" is one of the few strictly euphemistic terms used at all frequently in this connection.

Since birth control is relatively freely discussed and contraceptives advertised in the newspapers, albeit usually under the euphemistic heading "Gummivaror," it is quite natural to assume that there would be few indirections in this field. That also proved to be the case insofar as the material examined is concerned. Abortion was also discussed freely and realistically and therefore yielded only a handful of examples. All forms of sex abnormality seem to be less openly treated; at least my material gives little evidence to the contrary. The fact that the subject was not

¹⁵ Blomberg, Harry, *Floden Stiger*, Stockholm, 1937, p. 21.

¹⁶ Smirnof, Karin, *Första Akten*, Stockholm, 1930, pp. 102-103.

frequently discussed in the material consulted may, in part, account for this.

Most of the terminology with reference to prostitution, a rather large group, is euphemistic in character. The indirections vary in their euphemistic quality, but the fact remains that with comparatively few exceptions they are indirections. Such terms as "gatflicka, dåliga flickor, 'damer,' vilse flickor, lätta (lättare) flickor, fallna flickor," "lösaktiga flickor," and "nattfjärilar" are the most common of many indirect names for prostitutes. This is an area in which the trend does not seem to be away from indirections, as far as the "professional" vocabulary is concerned, although the subject itself is discussed frankly and openly in the press. A rather typical example follows:

—sedan nationella församlingen stängde bordellerna har gatorna översvämmats av fallna flickor, som går ut på trottoaren i stället för att verka inomhus.¹⁷

In the literature of the lighter genre the subject is almost without exception handled through indirection, but in such a manner as to leave room for only one interpretation. There can hardly be any question of what idea the author wants to convey in the sentence:

Och så fanns det något som kallades 'Lustwaffe', d.v.s. en samling ariskt sköna damer, som spatserade omkring i uniform, men synbarligen gjorde sin huvudsakliga tjänstgöring med uniformerna avtagna.¹⁸

In the category "crime, excessive drinking, etc.," indirections are still common. As far as the drinking is concerned, however, it is to be noted that for the most part they are the old, well-established formulas ("Brattens ljuva droppar, alltför starka drycker, en pärla, en flaska starkt, något överförfriskad," etc.) which in their usual context are open to only one interpretation and are not used to avoid offending the sensitive reader. Hence many of them have lost their euphemistic quality and have become merely stylistic variations.

Outside of crimes connected with sex, theft seems to be the only crime which is still subject to any significant use of euphemisms. In connection with automobile thefts, for example, the words "stjäl" and "tjuv" are practically never used, but have been replaced by the less blunt "lån" and "lånare." That there even seems to have developed a real difference in

¹⁷ *Dagens Nyheter*, September 14, 1948, p. 6, col. 5.

¹⁸ Krantz, Claes, *Turist i Befriad Land*, Stockholm, 1946, p. 175.

meaning between "lån" (borrowing) and "stöld" (theft) when applied to such thefts is clear from the following:

Det värsta var att han inte bara "lånat" maskinerna, utan försökt bygga om dem, så att de inte skulle gå att känna igen. Därför var han nu åtalad för stöld och inte för "lån."¹⁹

In the matter of profanity and the use of vulgar and obscene language, often closely related to sex, there seems to be a rather definite trend. Here the milder euphemistic terms such as "sjutton," "fasen," "förbaskad," "sabla," "fanders," "attan," "Hälsingland," etc., and such typographical devices as dashes, quotation marks, or incomplete words are giving way to the more forceful taboo words written out in full. These words are, of course, not obscene in themselves, but only by association with certain aspects of the process of life have they become considered as such, even though the question of their respectability would be only one side of their historical development. Despite the fact that they have been taboo, a large group of these terms, including those commonly referred to under the heading "the Anglo-Saxon four-letter words" have become part of our linguistic background. This is true although the stigma attached to "de där orden som står på plank och toalettväggar"²⁰ is great enough to prevent them from being listed in most of the main dictionaries.

In an article dealing with various aspects of the use of obscenity, Allen Walker Read states that: "The determinant of obscenity lies not in words or things, but in the attitudes that people have towards those words and things. To hazard a definition we may say that obscenity is any reference to the bodily functions that gives to anyone a certain emotional reaction, that of a 'fearful thrill' in seeing, doing, or speaking the forbidden. Thus there is the existence of a ban or taboo that creates the obscenity where none existed before."²¹ An excellent illustration of this may be found in the fact that the word which formerly appeared on the printed page only as s--t or similarly disguised is a fairly respectable word widely used in certain areas of Skåne, meaning dirt, whereas in Jämtland, for example, the word is avoided in most situations as being vulgar. Exactly the opposite situation prevails with the word "lort," which is

¹⁹ *Dagens Nyheter*, September 24, 1948, p. 6, col. 1.

²⁰ Tengroth, Birgit, *Törst*, Stockholm, 1948, p. 128.

²¹ Read, Allen Walker, "An Obscenity Symbol," *American Speech*, IX (1934), 264.

acceptable in Jämtland but seems to be taboo in Skåne for the same reason. Today, however, both words appear freely on the printed page in books as well as newspapers. For example: "Att ha en kejsarinna i släkten är förresten inte kattlort det heller,"²² and "... men aldrig att en sådan skitskribent har i de mest litterära kretsar blivit mottagen, som ett klart skinande ljus."²³ It is perhaps significant that in all the material I collected the formerly so common indirection "s--t" and all similar devices combined were outnumbered better than fifty to one by the taboo word itself.

In addition to discussing those words which have to do primarily with the sexual or excremental functions of the body, Allen Walker Read points out that sometimes a word to which the "fearful thrill" has become attached has a simple, relatively harmless meaning. For example, such terms as "bloody" in England, "stomach," "undies," "sweat," "belly," "thigh," "navel," "breast," and others were considered quite "naughty" a few decades ago. The response to these words, he says, is an emotional one, quite out of proportion to the simple semantic content of the word, and not a rational one. The reaction to vulgar, obscene words is neither neutral nor one of disgust, but produces "a titillating thrill of scandalized perturbation."²⁴

The taboo which creates the obscene vocabulary out of "ordinary" words has parallels in other fields also, based on psychological reactions and attitudes towards certain concepts. The exaggerated feeling of delicacy which led people to use euphemisms such as "det onämnbara" ("unmentionables") for underclothing readily comes to mind. Such words as those used in blasphemy connected with the deity; those dealing with illness, accident, and death; those referring to the negative spirits such as the devil also become a part of this concept, i.e., taboos for which we have sought substitutes. The substitutes become the "scape-goats" and fill the need for some symbolism for the forbidden or fearful. This artificial creation then continues to be preserved as long as we react toward these matters as did the lady who enjoyed the necessity of hiding the true meaning of what she was saying from her children: "Det bidrog

²² *Dagens Nyheter*, September 5, 1948, p. 5, col. 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, October 14, 1948, p. 3, col. 2.

²⁴ Read, Allen Walker, "An Obscenity Symbol," *American Speech*, IX (1934), 264.

starkt till hemtrevnaden att behöva bryta av meningen på mitten med en blick åt barnungarna."²⁵

It seems to be a fact, however, that the use of euphemisms with reference to the devil, hell, damnation, and, to some extent, the deity, is giving way to the taboo words themselves. "Gud," although it occurs quite frequently in milder profanity, does not play as big a role among the Swedish profane expressions as, for example, in French or English. On the other hand, indirections for "Jesus" are very common. Some of these expressions have lost the spontaneity that often characterizes euphemisms to the extent that they are listed in the major dictionaries. Some are used merely as intensifiers showing approval rather than disapproval.

If many of these expressions—obscurity, blasphemy, irreverence, etc.—as Read suggests, originally grew out of superstitious fear, it seems only logical to assume that whenever they are no longer associated with fear or mystery the substitutes would give way to the taboo word itself. With respect to the use of vulgar and obscene terminology and in the attitude toward accidents and certain illnesses such as cancer, tuberculosis, and insanity as well as toward death, the approach in recent Swedish literature and in the newspapers indicates an increasing frankness and objectivity. Occasionally there is even a somewhat flippant, frivolous attitude, well illustrated by the newspaperman who writes: "Såvida man dessförinnan inte kallas hädan—(Dom uttrycker sig så där i småstäder). Vad han menade var 'innan man kilar vidare.'" ²⁶

There seems to be ample evidence, then, to indicate that there has been a sufficient change in the social structure and in the attitudes of a sufficient number of people to make a noticeable impression on the language with respect to the use of euphemisms in all fields except the political. This change in the use of indirection is reflected in the recent fiction as well as in newspapers and to some extent in oral usage; it is one of degree rather than complete abandonment of all inhibitions. The raw material consulted indicates that terminology connected with sex is still, numerically speaking, more frequently than not handled through the use of euphemism. Unquestionably, however, the tendency is on the one hand toward a greater directness of expression, and on the other toward the use of euphemisms as a stylistic means to increase rather than tone down the

²⁵ Sillanpää, F. E., *Finskt Folk*, Stockholm, 1940, p. 25.

²⁶ *Dagens Nyheter*, May 20, 1948, p. 6, col. 7.

effect. With respect to the deity, the devil, all forms of profanity and obscenity and references to illness, accidents, and death the taboo words are today used much more frequently than indirections; in some cases, almost to the complete exclusion of the formerly so common euphemisms. To be sure, this tendency is not uniform, nor in some cases radical, but rather represents a gradual process which seems to have been greatly accelerated since Björkman published his findings in 1937 and which may become even more marked over a period of additional decades.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES
SUMMER SCHOOL SCHEDULE, 1961

Conversational Swedish for Beginners—2a—Mrs. Camerini

Open to freshmen MTWThF — 8:30
 MWF — 9:30

Scandinavian Classics—70a-135a (Literature in Translation)—Mr. Næss

Sophomore standing MTWThF — 10:30

The Dramas of Henrik Ibsen—78a-131a (In Translation)—Mr. Næss

Sophomore standing MTWThF — 8:30

Contemporary Swedish Literature—132—Mrs. Camerini

Sophomore standing MTWThF — 10:30

REVIEWS

Víga-Glúms Saga. Edited by G. Turville-Petre. Second Edition. Oxford University Press, London, 1960. Pp. lvi + 158. 21 shillings.

In the twenty years since Turville-Petre's edition of *Víga-Glúms Saga* first appeared it has justifiably enjoyed extensive use both as a student's reading text and as a scholarly edition. The set of notes accompanying it in the first edition provided students of Old Icelandic with a text suitable for advanced reading with the aid of a dictionary, and the excellent and thorough introductory remarks concerning the origin and manuscript tradition of the saga made it an indispensable reference work for scholars working with this or related sagas. In addition to the introduction and the set of general notes, the first edition contained a set of textual notes, giving variant readings and discussion pertaining to them, an appendix containing the texts of two manuscript fragments, a list of abbreviations and bibliographical references, two genealogical tables, and indexes of personal and place names. Since the idiomatic structure of the saga is at points rather involved it is not surprising, as Turville-Petre points out in the preface to the second edition, that 'many students have suffered grave difficulty in understanding its idioms,' despite the rather extensive notes. To alleviate this situation a glossary has been added in the second edition.

Since this glossary is the only difference between the first and second editions (except for a few corrections here and there), it would perhaps have been more accurate to describe this book as a new printing with added glossary. The glossary is for the most part excellent and as far as its organization and contents are concerned leaves little to be desired. Too often, however, the student looking up a word will find himself referred for a translation or explanation to a note located in another section of the book. This makes the use of the glossary unnecessarily involved. It would in most cases have been better to include the complete explanation in the glossary itself. This is the same objection that Einar Haugen makes in his review of the second edition of Gordon's *Introduction to Old Norse* (SS, May 1958), in which the same system of both notes and glossary is employed. As a general principle, all information concerning interpretation should be included in the glossary of any such edition. Only additional, non-linguistic, information should be given in notes, and then these should preferably be placed on the same page as the occurrence in the text. The principal disadvantage with notes in a separate section is that the student becomes so discouraged looking for explanations which he does not find that eventually he doesn't bother looking at all.

It is realized, of course, that the original notes were preserved in toto in the second edition for purely practical reasons, and the expense saved in this manner was undoubtedly considerable. This was also probably the reason why the introductory sections dealing with textual history and manuscript tradition were not revised at all. This is a bit unfortunate, however, since much has been written about this saga since 1940. The saga has been included in volume IX of the *Íslensk Fornrit* series (*Eyfirðinga sögur*, 1956) and prefaced with an excellent introduction by Jónas Kristjánsson in which he discusses not only his own and Turville-Petre's views, but also those of

Björn M. Ólsen and Jón Jóhannesson dealing for the most part with the existence and nature of the supposedly lost *Esphælinga saga*. The brief mention of the research of these scholars that Turville-Petre makes in the preface to the second edition is not commensurate with its importance.

Space limitations make it impossible to make any detailed comments on interpretation nor would it, because of the general excellence of the glossary, really be necessary, but at one point the student could have been given a little more specific information. As all who have read the saga know, Glúm's eventual downfall rests on an ambiguity. When asked to swear an oath concerning his guilt in the slaying of Þorvaldr krókr he states "... segi ek þat Æsi, at ek vark at þar, ok vák at þar, ok rauðk at þar odd ok egg. ..." Since the whole story depends on the interpretation of this passage, the student must understand exactly both possible interpretations. Under 'vega' in the glossary 'vák at þar' is translated 'I fought there or I did not fight there' and the student is referred to the article on 'leiða' for an explanation of Þorvald's later remark that Glúmr had not placed the stress as is usually done. The student would more surely get the point if he were told that 'vega at' means to attack or fight against someone, while 'vega' alone in such a context means to kill. The correct interpretation of 'vák at' is therefore either 'I attacked' (with *at* stressed) or 'I did not kill' (with enclitic *-at*). No explanation of this passage is given in the notes, which in the first edition constituted the only aid given the student. *Auminginn!*

KENNETH G. CHAPMAN
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Njal's Saga. Translated with an Introduction by Magnús Magnússon and Hermann Pálsson. Penguin Books, Inc., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1960. Pp. 378. The Penguin Classics, L 103. Five shillings.

Here is a new British translation of *Njal's Saga*, done by two Icelanders, one brought up in Scotland, and published at a fair price in the Penguin Classics. There has been no better news since Dasent's translation of 1861 was published by the Everyman's Library in 1911. It is too bad that the Modern Library of America never was interested in publishing this medieval classic as it did many others, but it is eminently fitting that it should now be published in some of the cheap paperback series and perhaps it is logical that it should be done by as fine a company as Penguin Books. The translators pay just tribute to the now century-old translation of Dasent, which was a little too literal and too archaic to catch the plainspoken style of the original. They also pay tribute to the 1955 American version made by Bayerschmidt and Hollander for the American-Scandinavian Foundation, acknowledging their debt to both translations, though they admit having their own ideas about their choice of words and phrases. Obviously both the Americans and the young British-Icelanders try to avoid the archaic diction of Dasent, substituting a more modern idiom which has a greater chance of rendering faithfully the simple and realistic flavor of the original without debasing it in the direction of modern vulgarity or slang or making

it stilted by too literary a style. Both the Americans and the British-Icelanders have succeeded; both versions make easy reading; they are racy, fluent, and readable; but I should think that the Icelandic-British translators would be more reliable in getting to the true meaning of the original, since both are native Icelanders and both have had the privilege of studying with Einar Ól. Sveinsson, who now is the foremost authority on *Njal's Saga*. Indeed, they dedicate their translation to him. This translation is certainly racy, fluent, and readable, even when you pick as complicated a passage to read as the dramatic scenes at the Althing, where the lawyers are fighting each other verbally and quoting long legal phrases such as *yfir höfði Jóni*, "in the presence of Jón" (p. 308). Nevertheless one should here have expected to find a note on this peculiar idiom which in reality means "in the presence of N.N." But in general, footnotes are plentiful and good; often they help the modern reader with genealogical matters. An index of personal names and some genealogical tables help in these matters, too. The unusually fine introduction is entirely written by Magnús Magnússon. It is good to see that these two young scholars are now available to write the translations for the Nelson's Icelandic Texts which are being published in Edinburgh. Mr. Hermann Pálsson is a professor of Old Norse or Icelandic at the University of Edinburgh. The translators and the Penguin Classics are certainly to be congratulated on this publication.

STEFÁN EINARSSON

The Johns Hopkins University

Kjalnesinga saga, Jökuls Þáttur Búasonar, Viglundar saga, Króka-Refs saga, Þórðar saga hreðu, Finnboga saga, Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls. (Íslensk fornrit, XIV). Jóhannes Halldórsson gaf út. Hið íslenska fornritafélag, Reykjavík, MCMLIX. Pp. lxxvi + 400.

The editor of this new volume is a young scholar in Reykjavík, who works for the Althing. The sagas are from the latest period of saga-writing: *Kjalnesinga saga* dates from the days of Bishop Árni Þorláksson (1222-1298), *Jökuls Þáttur* from the fifteenth century, *Viglundar saga* from ca. 1400, *Króka-Refs saga* from the fourteenth century, *Þórðar saga hreðu* (in two versions) from after the tenure of Bishop Egill Eyjólfsson at Hólar (1332-41), *Finnboga saga* from ca. 1300, and, finally, *Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls* from the fifteenth century. A good many of these sagas have been preserved in many manuscripts on skin and paper, but not all of them have, by any means, been edited from all the manuscripts.

Króka-Refs saga tells an unusual story; the others, being late sagas, differ in many ways from the classical early sagas, not least so in their choice of literary motifs. These sagas share many of their motifs with folk tales, *fornaldarsögur*, and medieval tales of adventure, romance and chivalry. The Cinderella or *kolbítur* motif is quite common in these stories. The motif of parricide is practically unknown in the classical sagas, but here in *Kjalnesinga saga* we find a young boy returning from abroad and wrestling with his father with fatal results. It is suggested that a mother's witchcraft helped the boy. As the editor tells us, this reminds one not only of the old Hildebrand-Hadubrand motif in Old High German but also and, as Einar Ól. Sveinsson has sug-

gested, more closely of a story told about the Irish hero CuChullainn and his father; indeed, the Irish parallel seems closer, so that Einar Ól. Sveinsson believes that it was preserved in oral tradition on Kjalarnes from the time of the settlement when the inhabitants still spoke or understood Irish to the time of saga-writing. There is another diluted literary motif in *Pórðar saga hreðu* which the editor did not catch. This is in Chapter 5 (p. 188) where Ormr is killed because he lays his head in a girl's lap, or in her knees, as the text has it. This betrayal in and by the lap of a woman also occurs in the Stiganda-episode (*Þattr*) in *Laxdæla saga* where it is more fully developed than here and in several English ballads, like the *Judas Ballad*. See my article, "A Ballad and a Folk Tale Motif," in *Melanges de Linguistique et de Philologie* (Fernand Mossé in Memoriam. Paris, 1959) pp. 122-128.

STEFÁN EINARSSON

The Johns Hopkins University

Danske Metrikere. Udgivet af Arthur Arnholtz og Erik Dal. Kommentاربند IIA: Indledning til Judichær og IIB: Noter til Judichær af Erik Dal. J. H. Schultz Forlag, Copenhagen, 1960. Pp. 334 (I and II).

The two new volumes (Kommentاربند IIA and IIB) of the distinguished publication *Danske Metrikere* constitute Erik Dal's doctoral dissertation. The substance of the work is the first of these volumes entitled *Judichær: Hans Værk og hans Kilder*. In volume II of *Danske Metrikere* (1954) the editors had published Søren Poulsen Gotlænder Judichær's *Synopsis Prosodiae Danicae* (1650) and the more ambitious, posthumous *Prosodia Danica* (1671). With Peder Jensen Roskilde and the learned Hans Mikkelsen Ravn, Judichær is one of the most important prosodists and grammarians in Danish literature of the seventeenth century. In originality, scholarship, and the scope of his vision Judichær is, according to Erik Dal, inferior to Roskilde and Ravn. Because of a series of misfortunes attending attempts to publish his comprehensive *Prosodia Danica* Judichær even suffered the distressing fate of losing to Ravn the priority of some of his metrical observations. He was, however, a staunch champion of the Danish language in a period where most scholars preferred to write in Latin and may justly claim the distinction of having been the first prosodist and grammarian in Denmark to write in the vernacular.

Like several of his learned contemporaries Judichær combined in his work the qualities of polyhistor with those of grammarian and prosodist. *Synopsis Prosodiae Danicae* and *Prosodia Danica* are a combination of grammars and prosodies, with odd bits of historical erudition thrown in for good measure. In five scholarly chapters Erik Dal discusses: Judichær's general European (limited to the Netherlands and Germany) and Danish backgrounds; the extent of Judichær's erudition; his Danish language, with examination of his orthography, use of foreign words (he was a moderate purist), etymologies, new formations etc.; Judichær's own poetic practice which he employed as illustrations of his metrical theories; and most importantly his work on the revisions of the old Danish hymns. By Bishop Jesper Brochmand Judichær had been entrusted with the important task of revising the hymns in *Hans Thomissøns Salmebog* many of which were marred by serious metrical flaws. Broch-

mand had lent his own copy of the hymn book to Judichær and had marked the hymns which he thought needed to be improved. According to Erik Dal, who readily concedes Judichær's good intentions and practical metrical skill, Judichær's revisions are frequently rigid and pedantic, lacking in genuine piety towards the beauty of the venerable hymns. It remained for a greater man than Judichær, Thomas Kingo, to carry out the first authoritative revision of the old Danish hymns in 1689. Erik Dal suggests that Judichær might have been more successful in this work if he had established closer contact with his two great contemporaries Arrebo and Ravn who had worked on similar problems. But Judichær, embittered somewhat by his many scholastic setbacks, seems to have felt jealous of these two luminaries and consequently withdrew into isolation. Judichær's horizon was narrowed by this circumstance, to the detriment of his work; the important treatise by Peder Jensen Roskilde *Prosodia Danicæ Linguae* of 1627 he does not seem to have known at all.

Probably the real merit of Erik Dal's thorough, erudite study can only be appreciated by scholars who are specialists on the European prosodies and grammars of the seventeenth century. This reviewer, who cannot claim that distinction, finds *Judichær: Hans Værk og hans Kilder* very informative, illuminating, and clearly written. It is a distinguished contribution to the impressive series *Danske Metrikere* of which Erik Dal himself has for several years been one of the editors.

BØRGE GEDSØ MADSEN
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Nelson, E. Clifford, and Fevold, Eugene L. *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans*. Two volumes. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1960. Pp. xix + 357 and xix + 379. \$12.50.

This monumental work is a comprehensive, scholarly, extensively documented history from the very beginnings of Lutheran church work among immigrants from Norway to the time when the largest synod among their descendants joined with Lutherans of other national backgrounds through the merger consummated by the end of 1960.

Realizing that the immigrant "carried with him a . . . heritage from . . . his mother country which was an integral part of him" (I, 4), Dr. Fevold has included in the introductory section an account of general conditions in nineteenth-century Norway, as well as a sketch of the early immigration and its causes plus an evaluation of the influence of the frontier on the immigrant. Good as both chapters are, a few statements might be questioned: It would be difficult to find evidence that "the common people felt that officialdom was endeavoring to foist a foreign culture upon them" (I, 8); the Swedish union was hardly "basically distasteful" (I, 5) before the years immediately preceding its termination; Knut Langeland's experience (I, 9) can hardly be called typical; and, as C. J. Hambro has stated, the custom—often disregarded—of doffing one's hat to officials hardly influenced any *bonde* to emigrate.

The more detailed discussion of the church seems outstanding indeed. The varied lines of development are set forth with a keen appreciation of the diversity of the

movements and their relations to the general conditions in the country. The author indicates briefly the influence of each of these movements on the religious organizations in the New World, with, of course, emphasis on the three great revivals which largely shaped the churches on both sides of the Atlantic. It made me appreciate more fully that conflict and division would be almost inevitable in the freedom of the New World, while, on the other hand, the fact that all these elements had been kept within the state church, however tenuous the union, gave all the immigrants a common background which would eventuate in movements toward union.

How the Norwegian heritage helped to shape the church of the pioneers from its inception is brought out in Dr. Nelson's vivid characterization of three "trail blazers," whose vigorous personalities and uncompromising views made fragmentation inevitable. The first synod to emerge was the low church, Haugean Eielsen Synod (1846). As its "trail blazer" Elling Eielsen was fundamentally opposed to organization, confusion naturally resulted and the Hauge Synod, a larger, more moderate body, was also formed (1876).

The contrast between these low church bodies and the Norwegian Synod is emphasized. The influence of J. W. C. Dietrichson, the "trail-blazer" of the latter, was not comparable to that of Eielsen, but the men who organized the Synod were, like Dietrichson, university trained men of Norway's "aristocracy," which was not, however, a "caste" (I, 97). While the author sees the need of "self-criticism in relation to . . . his possible prejudices" (II, vii), there seems to be an occasional slip. Thus the disparaging word "orthodoxism" (I, 151) might be used with greater discrimination, and the statement that, according to the Synod, "correct doctrine was a necessary prerequisite for a saving faith" (I, 188) can hardly be intentional. Through its leadership the Synod attained a "unique solidarity," but "the monolith . . . suffered a fissure" (I, 179) caused by the Missourian influence and the slavery discussion. Both caused a discord between the laity and the clergy, although it is not correct to say that many of the clergy were Democrats (I, 174). The astute comment is added that "the question which harrasses American Lutheranism in the twentieth century lay at the root of the slavery controversy in the nineteenth century" (I, 181).

C. L. Clausen is represented as a "trail blazer" among the groups which aimed "to walk the middle road," though he became a leader only after confused strivings among them to find a *modus vivendi* midst a variety of tendencies. There were attempts to cooperate with "Americanized" Lutherans even in the use of English, while at the same time maintaining their Lutheran traditions, as well as abortive efforts to work with other Scandinavians. Eventually this led to the formation of the small Norwegian Augustana Synod and the larger Conference.

The story of the formation of these five church bodies may seem baffling, but the authors show the general pattern in the diversity: that it was the "demand for agreement that tore the Norwegians into so many ecclesiastical fragments" (I, 241), but that the many divisions have served the church by enabling immigrants of different backgrounds to find a congenial church home within the Lutheran fold. Since they were conscious of their common heritage, there arose very early a desire for a closer cooperation. In the period before 1890 the "Union Movement" and the "Theological

Warfare" seem but phases of one problem. The keen analysis of the bitter conflicts within synods and between synods shows the futility of insistence upon absolute agreement. As this became more or less recognized, the last and seemingly most futile of the controversies, the Election Controversy which split the Synod, could stimulate the striving for union.

The first union to be achieved was the United Church, consisting of those groups which "sought to walk a middle way" (II, 4). "The age of major schisms on questions of doctrine was ended" (II, 36). Yet the United Church was harrassed for about a decade by "one of the bitterest and most unpleasant episodes in the life of the church" (II, 37). The Augsburg controversy led to another split and the formation of the Free Church.

But the quest for union did not abate. A sketch of the growth of the churches—vigorous in spite of the handicap of disunity—precedes a penetrating account of the complex events leading up to the union of the three largest bodies each representing one of the main tendencies brought along from the mother country. This formation in 1917 of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (later the Evangelical Lutheran Church), Dr. Nelson states, "is unique in at least one particular. For the first time in American church history three European emphases were blended in one American denomination" (II, 230).

The section on the period after 1917 begins with a thought-provoking "interpretation of the heritage." It is very unfortunate to speak of the work of the pioneer church as done "within the walls of a cultural ghetto" (II, 229). Had there not at first been concentration on the duty near at hand, there would later have been no treasure chest to open for America (II, 240).

The account of the extensive growth in every line since 1917 is rich and inclusive, centering upon the Americanization of the church. Yet some of the material does not fit under the narrow title, "The Church Discovers America." Moreover, the clergy as well as the laity had long ago "discovered America" and the opportunities it offered for establishing a church unhampered by old world restraints, but *not* as a "melting pot."

The final chapter is an exhaustive account of how the Evangelical Lutheran Church outgrew its "ecclesiastical insularity" (II, 281) until it was ready to lose its identity in the merger forming The American Lutheran Church. The author has some definite reservations about the form of this merger, but not so about the decision of his church to cooperate in the wider ecumenical movement of the age by joining the World Council of Churches.

KAREN LARSEN
St. Olaf College

McFarlane, James Walter. *Ibsen and the Temper of Norwegian Literature*. Oxford University Press, London, 1960. Pp. 188. 21s.

American readers know Mr. McFarlane's ability as a critic by his article on Hamsun's early novels ("The Whisper of the Blood," *PMLA* 1956) and his sensitiveness as a translator by his recent rendering of Hamsun's *Pan*. He is now engaged in translating a number of Ibsen's plays. For several years McFarlane has been publishing

articles on Norwegian literature in the *Times Literary Supplement*, London. The present volume is thus a harvest for the most part of earlier essays.

Ibsen and the Temper is not intended to be a history of Norwegian literature, but the author has nevertheless been able to suggest a sense of continuity over a span of more than two centuries, from Holberg to Duun. McFarlane's work presents greater depth of analysis of a relatively few figures and thus complements at certain given points the inclusive *History of Norwegian Literature* by Harald Beyer; for example, McFarlane's forty pages on the early novels of Hamsun. On the other hand, to gain a total portrait of Hamsun as an author (i.e., his later novels—somewhat cursorily and injudiciously dismissed by McFarlane—his dramas, polemical essays and, above all, his poetry) one must go to other sources.

With the exception of the essay on Hamsun, McFarlane's other major chapters are treated with a combination of literary history, biography and subjective aesthetic criticism. Completeness of analysis of an individual author, which this combined approach suggests, is not always achieved. If completeness is a virtue, however, the lively, witty disquisition on Bjørnson is one of the best in the book, for here emerges a full view of a personality and his work. This essay suffers by comparison with Professor Billeskov-Jansen's estimate of Bjørnson in *Vinduet* (1960), however.

McFarlane's treatment of Holberg's comedies is commendable, but since he goes to the trouble of listing the historical works, the *Moral Thoughts* and the *Epistles*, some comment is due on Holberg's view of history, his stature and influence as an historian as well as on the source of the *Thoughts* and the *Epistles*, particularly in view of Professor Billeskov-Jansen's recent research on this problem.

"It is doubtful," says McFarlane, "whether Wergeland or any of those associated with him had any very clear image of what it was they so ardently sought and to which they paid such eager homage—except they were agreed it went with a strong Danophobia" (p. 33). The Danophobia aside, one must recognize that Norwegian nationalism had begun some two and a half decades before the dissolution of the Dano-Norwegian Union in 1814 and that by the time Wergeland had produced his major work, *Creation, Man and Messiah* (1830), it was in full bloom. One wonders if Wergeland and his associates were so completely in the dark concerning what "they so ardently sought": the development of Norwegian culture on national bases. The major exception that I take to McFarlane's treatment of Wergeland is that he does not present a systematic analysis of Wergeland's cosmology, which has been done so ably by Daniel Hakonson. Had he done so, Wergeland's "storming of heaven" and other seeming excesses would at least have become clear, if not more palatable.

The essay on Ibsen raises two questions: (1) the view of Ibsen himself and (2) his relationship to Norwegian literature. If I read McFarlane's essay on Ibsen correctly, he will not permit any critic to arrive at a definitive definition of Ibsen's view of man and his world, for if anyone should be so incautious "the result is to draw too particular a distinction, is to make assertions that are all equally true, equally false, equally idle" (p. 61). McFarlane will have none of this, and his final view is that Ibsen "is irreducible" (p. 72). I do not subscribe to this view, but space permits me only to raise the question.

McFarlane's position is that Ibsen must be studied against his Norwegian milieu and that "Ibsen adorns Norwegian literature, but does not exemplify it" (p. 10). Several questions come to mind. Aside from technique, is there such a world of difference between what Ibsen does in the historical drama and what Bjørnson does? One may ask why a play like *Brand* does not exemplify Norwegian literature in the same manner that Bjørnson's *Beyond Human Power I* does? And why should Hamsun's *Munken Vendt* (1903) and Kinck's *Driftekaren* (*The Man of Instinct*, 1908) by inference at least be thought to exemplify Norwegian literature while *Peer Gynt* obviously does not? What does one do in this connection with the dramas of Heiberg or Amalie Skram's novel *Constance Ring* (1885; cf. *Hedda Gabler*)? It might be very difficult to demonstrate that the early Hamsun, Kinck or Olaf Bull, in a major sense, and Obstfelder, in a minor one, exemplify Norwegian literature. If Ibsen is to be studied against his Norwegian milieu, he must at least be placed in proper perspective, as a central figure in one of the two currents: Welhaven, Ibsen, Kinck, Olaf Bull, and perhaps Duun as opposed to Wergeland, Bjørnson, the later Hamsun, and Undset.

All of the shorter chapters (e.g., those on Kielland, Obstfelder) are well done. I miss in the comment on Garborg's *Weary Men* (*Traette Maend*, 1890, p. 173) that this novel sounded the death knell to naturalism and Brandeism in Norwegian literature, and I wonder if thought was given to Amalie Skram's *Hellemysrfsolket* when Garborg's *Students from the Country* (*Bondestudentar*, 1883) was called the best naturalistic novel in the literature of Norway. It would have helped, I think, to indicate that after *Jenny* (1911) Undset began a search for a tenable philosophy of life, the development of which is recorded in her novels and collections of short stories and essays until *Kristin Lavransdatter*, and that her outlook was not so different in say 1920 as it was at the time of her entrance into the Catholic Church in 1924. *Jenny* is one of the finest novels Undset has written. Revealing a profound insight into the nature of woman's love, it is sensitive and compassionate, and one is puzzled how McFarlane arrives at "its frank handling of certain erotic problems and its brutally realistic treatment of the unhappy love life of a woman artist" (p. 161).

There are times when the author has apparently leaned upon someone else for a thumbnail sketch of a work, and in such instances the genuineness and the conviction are lacking in the appraisal. There are times when proper comparisons do not seem to have been made in evaluating a work—I ask only that these should have been reflected, not stated. Some readers may feel that some conclusions need more support, but then we would be requesting a kind of book which McFarlane had no intention of writing. The work may appear uneven because of the rather fuller discussions of some figures, and the several critical approaches. It has a sustained interest, however, and, on the whole, presents many welcome observations on Norwegian literature.

SVERRE ARESTAD
University of Washington

NOTES

MEETING. The fifty-first annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study will be held in Room 232 of the Nebraska Union at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, on Friday, May 5, and Saturday, May 6.

FIRST SESSION, Friday, 8:30 A.M.

Welcome . . . Dean Walter E. Miltzer, University of Nebraska

Reading and Discussion of Papers:

1. Professor Lee M. Hollander, University of Texas: *Recent Trends in the Study of "The Elder Edda"* (20 min.)
2. Professor Cecil Wood, University of Minnesota: *The Origins of the Oral Tradition* (20 min.)
3. Professor Paul Schach, University of Nebraska: *An Unpublished Leaf of "Tristram's Saga"* (20 min.)

Coffee break

Presentation and Discussion of Reports*:

A. *The Problems of the Teacher of Norwegian* (30 min.) Professors Sverre Arestad, University of Washington (Chairman); Richard Beck, University of North Dakota; Kenneth Chapman, University of California, Los Angeles; Lloyd Hustvedt, St. Olaf College; Harald Næss, University of Wisconsin; O. T. Svare, Pacific Lutheran University.

B. *The Problems of the Teacher of Swedish* (30 min.) Professors Erik Wahlgren, University of California, Los Angeles (Chairman); Assar Janzén, University of California, Berkeley; Walter Johnson, University of Washington; Arne Lindberg, Washington State University, Pullman; Ivan Nylander, University of Minne-

sota, Duluth; Allan Rice, Ursinus College; Arthur Wald, Augustana College; Dr. Robert Raphael, University of Pennsylvania; Mr. Wendell P. Benson, Roosevelt High School, Minneapolis.

Lunch

SECOND SESSION, Friday, 1:30 P.M.

Reading and Discussion of Papers:

4. Professor Gösta Franzen, University of Chicago: *Linguistic Field Work in Iceland* (20 min.)
5. Professor Haakon Hamre, University of California at Berkeley: *Loanwords in Modern Faroese* (20 min.)
6. Professor Harald Næss, University of Wisconsin: *John Gabriel Borkman, Miner* (20 min.)

Coffee break

7. Professor Robert Spector, Long Island University: *Lagerkvist and the Uses of Deformity* (20 min.)
8. Professor Birgitta Steene, University of Alberta: *Tennessee Williams and the Swedish Stage* (20 min.)

Appointment of Committees . . . President Hollander

ANNUAL DINNER—7:30 P.M.

Professor Paul Schach, Toastmaster

THIRD SESSION, Saturday, 8:30 A.M.

Business meeting:

Report of the Managing Editor . . . Professor Walter Johnson, University of Washington

Report of the Secretary-Treasurer . . . Mr. Thomas Buckman, University of Kansas

New business.

Reading and Discussion of Papers:

9. Professor Børge Gedsø Madsen, University of California at Berkeley: *Leading Motifs in the Dramas of Kjeld Abell* (20 min.)
10. Professor George Schoolfield, Duke University: *The Post-war Novel of Swedish Finland* (20 min.)
11. Professor Richard Vowles, University of Florida: *The Symbolic Mill in Strindberg* (20 min.)
12. Professor Walter Johnson, University of Washington: *Strindberg's "Charles XII" and Expressionism* (20 min.)

* Each of these reports has been prepared through the cooperation of several people. Since the complete list of those who have contributed is not available in November, it will be published in the next number.

The dinner will be held in the Pan-American Room of the Nebraska Union. Reservations for the annual dinner should be sent directly to Professor Paul Schach, 301 Burnett Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 8.

Hotel reservations should be sent directly to one of these Lincoln hotels: The Cornhusker (\$6.25 for single rooms), 301 South 13th St.; The Capital (\$4.50 up), 145 North 11th St.; The Lincoln (\$4.25 up), 147 North 9th St.; and The Lindell (\$3.50 up), 230 North 11th St. Members who drive will have no difficulty in finding motel accommodations after they arrive.

The Committee for Local Arrangements consists of Professor and Mrs. Joseph E. A. Alexis, Professor and Mrs. Harald G. O. Holck, Professor and Mrs. A. L. Lugin, and Professor and Mrs. Schach.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA. Since the 1890's Scandinavian courses have been taught at Nebraska with relatively few interruptions. Professors Hjalmar A. Edgren, Joseph Alexis, A. Louis Elmquist, Erik Wahlgren, and Paul Schach have been among those who have taught these courses, and, as most of our readers know, all of these men with the exception of Dr. Edgren have played important roles in the history of our society. In recent years courses in Old Icelandic, Modern Icelandic, and Swedish have been given by Professor Schach.

OUR HOST. Paul Schach received his Ph.D. at Pennsylvania in 1949; his dissertation was "The Use of Scenery in the Old Icelandic Family Sagas." He has taught at Albright College (1938-1945), North Central College (1945-1951), and Nebraska (1951-). His many articles deal mainly with German colonial dialects and Old Icelandic. Among his recent publications is his translation of *The Eyrbyggja Saga* (in collaboration with Lee Hollander, 1959), and under way is a critical edition of *Tristram's Saga*. He has served as president, vice-president, and acting secretary-treasurer of our society.

APPOINTMENT. In September, the University of Kansas Board of Regents announced that our secretary-treasurer, Thomas R. Buckman, has been appointed director of the University of Kansas Library effective September 1, 1961. During the present year, Mr. Buckman will be associate director. All his fellow officers in SASS and other members who know what an excellent job he has done as secretary-treasurer extend their sincere congratulations.

SIGTUNA. Professors Alik Gustafson of Minnesota, Walter Johnson of Washington, Allan Lake Rice of Ursinus, Martin Söderbäck of North Park, and Erik Wahlgren of UCLA were guest participants at a conference on language and literature at Sigtuna in August. Discussed there were such matters as textbooks and other instructional material, the need for translations, and ways and means for extending contacts and cooperative efforts. The host participants, headed by Director Tore Tallroth of the Swedish Institute, provided a program which ranged from a highly informative lecture on trends in recent Swedish literature through observation of methods used in Swedish schools to decidedly enjoyable proofs of Swedish hospitality. Among the Swedish participants were several men who have taught Swedish in the United States—Doctors Gunnar Boklund (Harvard), Carl J. Engblom (Pennsylvania, Augustana), Karl-Ivar Hildeman (Harvard), Per-Axel Hildeman (Columbia), Erland Lagerroth (Augustana), Åke Leander (Columbia), Sven Linnér (Harvard), Jöran Mjöberg (Harvard), Sten Rein (Georgetown), Egil Törnqvist (Harvard), and Axel Wijk (Columbia).

AXEL JOHAN UPPVALL. On October 25, 1960, Professor Uppvall passed away at his home in Philadelphia. Born in Avelsäter, Sweden, on January 2, 1872, he received his university training at Göttingen, Colby College (B.A. 1905), Harvard (M.A., 1907), and Clark (Ph.D.). He taught at New Brunswick (1911–1916), Clark (1916–1918), and Pennsylvania from 1918 until his retirement about 1940. For his many contributions to Swedish-American cultural endeavors, he received the Royal Order

of Vasa and the Order of the North Star. Among his many publications two became widely known and discussed—*August Strindberg: A Psychoanalytical Study* and his *Swedish Grammar and Reader*. He was a contributor to *SS* and a loyal supporter of SASS.

NEW MEMBERS: Elmer H. Antonsen, Morton Grove, Ill.; Vilhjalmur Bjarnar, Ithaca, N.Y.; Professor Marc L. Ratner, Amherst, Mass. Institutions: Augsburg College Library, Minneapolis; Purdue University Library, Lafayette; Scandinavian Seminars, Vanløse, Denmark.

CORNELL. Viljalmur Bjarnar, born in Reykjavik in 1920 and trained at the University of Iceland and the University of Minnesota, has succeeded Jóhan Hannesson as Curator of the Fiske Icelandic Collection at Cornell University. Mr. Bjarnar holds two degrees from Minnesota including an M.A. in library science, with minors in linguistics and anthropology. He has taught Old Icelandic at Minnesota and served on the library staff there. In addition to his duties as curator, he will be on part-time duty as cataloger. In 1944–1945, Mr. Bjarnar collaborated with Dr. Finnogi Guðmundsson in editing the *Flateyjarbók*.

KENTUCKY. Anyone who wishes to participate in the Scandinavian section of the University of Kentucky Foreign Language Conference on April 27–29 should write to Professor Robert D. Spector, Long Island University, Brooklyn 1, New York, as soon as possible.

IN EUROPE. Three of our colleagues spent last summer in Iceland. Professor Stefán Einarsson of Johns Hopkins was there translating his history of Icelandic literature into Icelandic. Professor Rich-

ard Beck of North Dakota was in Iceland lecturing as the guest of friends and admirers throughout the country; he spent the latter half of July in Norway. After two weeks in Sweden and Norway, Professor Gösta Franzen spent two months in Iceland, partly doing field work on placenames and dialect in Dalasysla, partly doing research in the National Museum and the Office of the Icelandic Dictionary. Dr. Franzen had a grant from the American Philosophical Society. Professors Børge Gedsø Madsen and P. M. Mitchell were in Denmark.

WORKSHOP. The American-Scandinavian Workshop in Comparative Education held in Södertälje, Sweden, June 28-July 17, 1960, proved to be a stimulating experience for the 15 Americans and 150 Scandinavians who took part. This opportunity for American teachers to study Scandinavian education under ideal conditions was the result of several years of effort on the part of an American teacher who had taught in Sweden on an exchange program and who recognized the far-reaching effects of such a program. With the assistance of Skoldirektör Robert Wenngren, Södertälje, a three-week course was given. Ten days were spent with the Scandinavian teachers at Mariekällskolan in Södertälje where a dual program was in operation, lectures being given in Swedish and in English.

The Americans received an overview of Scandinavian education from the speakers who had been selected from the various phases of the educational system. The Scandinavians attended any of these lectures which held particular interest for them, but their agenda met their immediate needs. Dr. Marion Edman of

Wayne State University represented American Education and directed her talks to the Scandinavian teachers. She lectured in Swedish. Serving as coordinator was Miss Selma Jacobson of Chicago.

At the close of the Scandinavian portion of the workshop the teachers from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Åland, and Finland returned to their homes, while the Americans remained. Five days were then devoted to visiting schools in Uppland and Södermanland. The remainder of the time was given to a cultural study which took the group into Dalarna and back by way of Sundborn, Gävle, Uppsala, Sigtuna, and Stockholm.

The three-week course included related readings, a report on an individually selected subject, as well as the period in Sweden. Those who registered with Chicago Teachers College were eligible for 3 semester hours graduate credit. The cost of the workshop was \$300.00 and included first-class hotel rooms, food, trips, and materials.

Plans are now under way for a second workshop in 1961. Those interested in details may write Miss Selma Jacobson, 5641 Warwick Avenue, Chicago 34, Illinois. As a complement to this workshop a similar course is being planned for Scandinavian teachers to meet with American teachers in Chicago.

PH.D. Murray Hartman's dissertation, *Strindberg and O'Neill: A Study in Influence*, was accepted by New York University and the doctorate conferred on him in June. Dr. Hartman is a member of the Department of English at Long Island University, Brooklyn.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Nils Andrén's *Modern Swedish Government*, The Swedish Institute, Stockholm, 1959. —Eivind Berggrav's *God's Man of Suspense*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1960. —Olav Duun's *Floodtide of Fate*, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1960. —*Finlands-svenskt bibliotek* (1. Arvid Mörnes *Den svenska jorden*, 2. Hugo Ekhammars *Under torparsolen*, 3. Hagar Olssons *Chitambo*, 4. Jacob Tegengrens *Dikter i urval*, 5. Harald Hornborgs *Hakenskiölds på Sveaborg*, 6. Tito Collianders *Förbarma dig*, 7. Jarl Hemmers *Dikter i urval*, 8. M. v. Willebrand-Holmerus' *Hedvig och Desirée*, 9. Runar Schildts *Östnyländska berättelser*, 10. Michael Lybecks *Tomas Indal*, 11. R. R. Eklunds *Liten drömmarpilt*, 12. Konni Zilliacus' *Från ofärdstid och oroliga år*, 15. Valdemar Nymans *Margareta Jönsdotter till Bästö*), Holger Schildts Förlag, Helsingfors, 1960. —Karl-Ivar Hildeman, Sven G. Hansson, and Bengt R. Jonssons *Politisk rimdans*, Natur och Kultur, Stockholm, 1960. Henrik Ibsen's *"When We Dead Awaken" and Three Other Plays*, Doubleday, New York, 1960. —*Five Plays of Strindberg*, Doubleday, New York, 1960.

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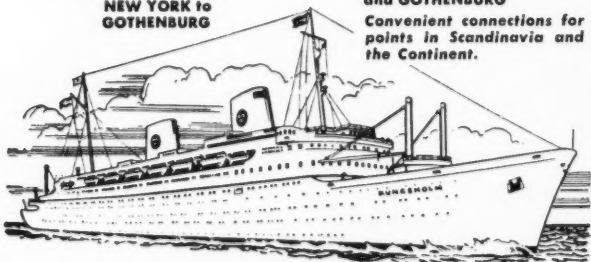
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